



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Grenada

International Religious Freedom Report 2005

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

Grenada and 2 smaller islands, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, have an area of 133 square miles and a population of slightly more than 100,000. The population is almost entirely of African, East Indian, and European descent. Approximately 93,000 persons live on the island of Grenada, 7,000 on Carriacou, and 900 on Petite Martinique. Roman Catholics account for 64 percent of the population, Anglicans 22 percent, Methodists 3 percent, and Seventh-day Adventists 3 percent. Other denominations include Presbyterian, Church of God, Baptist, and Pentecostal. In the last 2 years, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and the Mennonites established churches. The major Christian denominations are represented in most towns and villages except on Petite Martinique, where the population is 98 percent Roman Catholic and 2 percent Seventh-day Adventist. There are an estimated 5,000 Rastafarians. There are no mosques, although Muslims, who number approximately 500 including Muslim foreign medical students at St. George's University, congregate at a small religious center. There are an estimated 150 Baha'is.

Members of religious communities do not concentrate in any particular community or area. Well over 60 percent of the population regularly participates in formal religious services, and that percentage rises on major Christian holy days.

Hurricane Ivan damaged 98 percent of the churches on the island on September 7, 2004; 75 percent were severely damaged and 5 percent totally demolished. At the end of the period covered by this report, many churches were holding services under tents and in homes, while most churches, including the largest in St. George's, remained without roofs.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels strives to protect this right in full and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors.

The Constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, place of origin, political opinion, color, creed, or sex, and the Government generally adheres to these provisions. The Government is secular and does not interfere with an individual's right to worship.

Nearly all government officials are Christians. The Christian holy days of Good Friday, Corpus Christi, Easter, Whit Monday, and Christmas are national holidays.

The Government has taken steps to promote interfaith understanding. In January 2004, the Government established the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Relations, which holds monthly meetings to bring together members from Christian and non Christian groups, including Baha'is, Muslims, and Rastafarians.

The Prime Minister's office is responsible for issuing licenses for religious groups, buildings, and events. Religious groups must register with the Government. They are entitled to some customs exemptions, such as from import taxes on musical instruments.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Abuses by Terrorist Organizations

There were no reported abuses targeted at specific religions by terrorist organizations during the period covered by this report.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom. During the period covered by this report, there were numerous activities to promote greater understanding between different denominations and religions. The Conference of Churches Grenada, which was created a decade ago, became more active in its attempts to facilitate closer relations among various religious organizations. The Christian Forum for Social Action discusses social issues such as drug use, HIV/AIDS, and other social ills. For Independence Day and Thanksgiving church services, most Christian denominations worship together at ecumenical observances.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Released on November 8, 2005

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